

THE EXPOSITOR

N D • H O M I L E T I C • R E V I E W



JOURNAL OF PRACTICAL CHURCH METHODS



The EXPOSITOR

and HOMILETIC REVIEW

A Journal of Practical Church Methods

The Pastor's Visit

One of the most important tasks of the minister is to visit in the homes of his members, and to share in helpful and sympathetic interest in the problems and joys and sorrows of everyday life.

So much depends on the nature of this interview. Some ministers approach the sick or troubled with a sort of holy superiority, and proceed from their lofty spiritual pedestal to hand down advice to the poor people who, they think, know so little of real life. The fact of the case may well be that the layman has learned far more of suffering and hope and faith than the minister himself. Where such an attitude of superiority is held, the minister will be consulted but little by the members of his Church.

There are true pastors who can so enter into the problems and feelings of the parishioners that their full understanding of the issues involved and their helpful suggestions, may lead the needy soul to higher ground. This is the relationship every minister should strive to have with his people. He must be able to "sit where they sit" and feel as they feel.

The art of proper counseling is receiving much attention these days. In a recent lecture on this subject the noted speaker pointed out that unless the minister himself learns something from each interview with his people, he cannot do his best work.

To merely tell another to have faith and pray and read the Bible is not enough. He must be shown concretely how these steps may be taken, and must be led sympathetically toward God. The pastor must enter into sympathetic concern with his friends in need, and, as in the case of the Master, have genuine compassion for them. Mere words of conventional advice are not enough. A minister does well to study this field seriously.—*The American Lutheran, quoted from "The Mennonite."*

It is the duty of the preacher not only to comfort the distressed but to distress the comfortable.

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CONTENTS



Ready for Church	293
James D. Jenkins	
Greatness is Relative	295
Richard Braunsentin	
The Pastor's Visit	290
Editorials	296
Church Methods	298
Choosing Sermons	
Back to School Party	
Credit Unions	
Open Church	
Jesus IS Standing By	
Serviceman's S.O.S.	
Sermons	302
What Wilt Thou Have Me To Do?	
Clarence E. Macartney	
Mountain Full of Horses	
William Goddard Sherman	
Why?	
Roger J. Neeb	
Junior Pulpit	313
Not So "Mere"	
Keep Trying	
Illustrations	315
Recent Books	318
Topical Index	321
Buyers Guide	322

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READY FOR CHURCH

JAMES D. JENKINS

THE EXPRESSION, "Get ready for church!", is heard every Sunday morning in the homes of people who are in the habit of going to church. Usually our preparation for church means merely to don our best clothes, shine our shoes, put on our newest dress and use plenty of cosmetics. How delighted we are when we have something new to wear to church! When a woman buys a new hat in the middle of the week, she can hardly wait until Sunday in order to wear it to church. I know a woman who has been dubbed, "The Hat" by her fellow worshippers because she wears a new hat at least once a month. And such hats!

Much time is spent and great energy is exerted in order to be ready for church. However, we are not ready for church if we spend our time and effort on the outward appearance. Too often we think more of getting ready to go into the presence of other people, than we do of being ready to go into the presence of God. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks of the hypocrites: "For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they will receive their reward." The only reward some people ever seek in going to church is to hear people rave over their new clothes, hat, or car-do. I know of at least one person who has missed that reward and the worship service was a complete flop as far as she was concerned. When she got home after church she said: "I am so mad I don't know what to do. No one there noticed what I had on. Old So-and-So looked at me, but she was too busy to say anything."

What would happen in the house of the Lord on Sunday if people would spend only half the time in preparing their hearts and minds as they do on the outward appearance? Such a spiritual atmosphere would be created that sinners would cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" The saints would shout for

joy, and the minister would preach with new power. If people would really get ready for church, Christianity would make the front page, and the world would take knowledge that we had been with Jesus. God has never failed to bless the people who were ready to receive His Blessing. We often go to church poor and needy creatures and come away in the same state, not because God was not ready to bless us, but because we were not ready to receive. "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me."

Micah asks the question: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" The Psalmist answers that question when he says: "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else I would give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

The Scriptures make it perfectly clear that he cannot be a true worshipper who is a voluntary and unrepentant breaker of the commandments of God. God cannot accept the worship of an unrepentant sinner. Outward sacrifice will not do. Worship cannot be outward unless it is really inward. The only preparation for church that really prepares one to come before the Lord, is the cleansing of the heart. If a man "regard iniquity in his heart" the Lord will not hear him. No wonder our church services are so often meaningless and ineffective! We bring into His holy presence that which is most repugnant to Him. Therefore:

"In vain we tune our formal songs,
In vain we strive to rise;
Hosannas languish on our tongues,
And our devotion dies."

Before we are ready for church we must be properly related to our brethren. Again, in the

Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Surely one is not ready for church if there is anything between him and his brother. Some differences, of course, cannot be adjusted because some men will not forgive. However, a sincere effort can be made for reconciliation. The spirit of worship is ruined when hearts are not sweet.

"Guess who I had to sit by in church today," said a man to his wife after attending church. "Old man John Doe! He gave me a dirty deal some years ago and I did not hear a thing the preacher said." Now, this man may have spent some time in getting his body ready for church, but he failed in the all important matter of getting his heart ready. Dr. Charles E. Jefferson once said: "Many city churches are made up of people who do not know one another, and who do not want to know one another. Too many village churches are composed of people who know one another, and are sorry they do." Are you sorry that you know the people in your church? Then remember that they also know you!

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity." Before one is ready for church he must have clean hands. It is vain to talk of inward experience unless the daily life is free from impurity, dishonesty, violence, and oppression.

The people who draw near to God must have clean hands. What monarch would have servants with filthy hands to wait at his table? If our hands are unclean, let us wash them in Jesus' precious blood, and so let us pray unto God, lifting up pure hands.

"And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes." The Jews often prayed with uplifted hands, but their hands were so stained with sin that God hid his eyes from them and would not hear their prayer. Are you ready for church? Look at your hands! Are they soiled with a business that is unclean? Have your hands taken that which is not yours? Do your hands show the marks of hard work for the Master, or are they soft and puffy from idleness? It is well to remember that our hands can be "full of blood" because of neglect just

as they can be stained by deliberate transgression.

Are you ready for church? Look at your heart! True religion is heart work. We must cleanse the body and put on our Sunday clothes, but with unwashed hearts we are unclean in the sight of God. Spurgeon once said: "We may lose our hands and yet live, but we could not lose our hearts and still live." There must be a work of grace in the core of the heart as well as in the palm of the hand, or our religion is a delusion." The pure in heart are the ones who behold the beauty of God; all others are blind to Him. The heart is the symbol of the mind—"As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." The curse of our modern day is evil thinking. We have toyed with impure thoughts until the foundation of character has crumbled under our feet. No nation can live above its thought life. The telling of "dirty stories" has become one of the most popular sins of our generation. With dirty minds, how can we live clean lives, to say nothing of being ready for church?

Are you ready for church? Look to your attitudes! "Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity?" In the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican we see reflected the attitude of many as they enter the church to pray. The Pharisee enters with the feeling that the entire congregation should welcome his coming and of course the Lord should be honored with his presence. Taking a conspicuous place, he says: "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I possess." While some men do not use these exact words, their attitudes are the same. They admit that they "do some things that are wrong," yet they do not do some things that others do. They attend church, "pay their part," and justify themselves while they admit that they are not pure within. If there is a known wrong in a man's life which he refuses to give up, he can never be ready for church until he humbles himself, deals with his sin, and prays with the Publican, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Humility is a rare virtue. The test of a truly great man is humility. "Stoop!" said an old man as with a youth he passed along a tunnel with low beams overhead. "Stoop! Stoop! You are a young man and have the world before you. Stoop as you go through it and you'll miss many hard things." Those who would ascend to God must descend in humility.

Having made all outward preparation for church and before entering the sanctuary, let us pray: "Create within me a clean heart, O

and, and renew a right spirit within me." Before going to church next Sunday I challenge you to spend just ten minutes immediately before leaving home going over in your mind the kind of life you have lived during the week, looking for and being willing to recognize your failures and shortcomings. This will

certainly help you in getting ready for church and will make the service more meaningful.

(Matt. 15:8. "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.")

GREATNESS IS RELATIVE

RICHARD BRAUNSTEIN

THE STANDARD definition for greatness is Service. It is forever fixed as a norm for Christian thinking and character. One can go no higher in the scale than *service*. This is the theme of biography and autobiography. The story is the record of men and women who have rendered service in one way or another, both in secular and religious realms. Yet there is more religion in industry than lies on the surface.

Until we have reached the light as promised by Jesus we are dealing with the subtleties of greatness in varying degrees. It cannot be limited to specific professions and vocations. A man may be a great surgeon but not a good Christian. Or, as a lawyer he may be a great orator and never grow beyond his logic. A man may be a famous cook and still be an unpleasant personality. "A mighty man of war but he was a leper." That word *but* divides between many persons and the ideals they are expected to live and show.

A reversal of human judgement is needed here and there. It is not all gold that glitters. Wars oftentimes expose feet of clay. Larger definitions clear popular conceptions and give the right perspective. In a short story called "THE SCULPTOR'S FUNERAL" Willa Cather gives a vivid picture of a group in the use of the deceased. His body had just been brought from the train. While he lay in state they discussed his character. The popular opinion was that because he made and left no net sum of money he was a failure. He possessed no land or cattle. They failed to go beyond the mundane and material. Finally, a man, disgusted with the dialogue, a dissolute lawyer, spoke as follows:

Harvey Merrick and I went to school together in the East. We were dead in earnest and we wanted to be proud of us some day. We meant to

—
p. (Major)
Shboro, North Carolina

be great men. Even I, and I haven't lost my sense of humor, gentlemen, I meant to be a great man. I came back here to practice and I found you didn't in the least want me to be a great man. You wanted me to be a shrewd lawyer. Our veteran here wanted me to get him an increase in pension because he had dyspepsia; Phelps here wanted a new county survey that would put the widow Wilson's little bottom farm inside his south line; Elder here wanted to lend money at 5 per cent a month and get it collected; Stark here wanted to wheedle old women in Vermont into investing their annuities in real estate and mortgages that were not worth the paper they were printed on. . . . Well, I came back here and became the *shyster* you wanted me to be.

"You pretend you have some respect for me; and yet you stand up and throw mud at Harvey Merrick whose soul you couldn't dirty and whose hands you couldn't tie. There have been times when Harvey's name in some paper has made me hang my head like a whipped dog; and again, times when I like to think of him off there in the world, away from this hog-wallow, climbing the big, clean upgrade he's set himself. . . . Harvey Merrick wouldn't have given one sunset over your marshes for all you've put together and you know it. . . . It's not for me to say why in the inscrutable wisdom of God, a genius should ever have been called from this place of hatred and bitter waters."

The quotation we have given, is of course fiction. But literature is a transcription of life. It holds up the mirror of truth. It reveals the lights and shadows of human nature,—its foibles and its follies, its successes and its failures, its low aims and its high ideals. The printed page goes beyond mere entertainment. It teaches. It admonishes. It warns. It comforts. It inspires. In the present instance we discover an outlook and viewpoint altogether too prevalent among persons and groups in private and public places. A fact overlooked most of the time is that we make a living by what we get but we make a life by what we give. The sculptor whose funeral we have just attended, no doubt made many dollars but on the other hand he must have given more beauty than money. He may not

(See page 319)

The Editor's Columns



12% Think They Might Go to Hell

TODAY's average American believes in God, considers religion "very important," attends church at least twice a month and thinks he'll go to Heaven when he dies.

These are among a few of the findings of probably the most comprehensive survey ever made of religious beliefs and practices in this country.

"It's the first time such a study has been made in the United States," said Father Paul Bussard, editor of the Catholic Digest. "On almost every subject covered, the facts had never been recorded before."

Here is the first consolidated summary of the main points so far determined about the faith and worship of those adult Americans questioned:

Nearly all of them—99 per cent—believe there is a God, although 2 per cent of these aren't positive, but like to think God exists. Only one per cent flatly don't believe.

Among men, 2 per cent are atheists, but among women, the number of non-believers doesn't amount to even one-half per cent. College graduates included 4 per cent atheists. Baptists and Catholics had the fewest doubters—virtually none.

Most people—77 per cent—think the soul lives on after death. A slightly lesser majority—72 per cent—believes there is a Heaven where the good are eternally rewarded.

However, 58 per cent think there is a Hell where the bad are everlastingly punished. Just a scant few—12 per cent—see any possibility whatever of their going to Hell.

The predominant conception of God—held by 79 per cent of adults—is a "loving father who looks after us," while 17 per cent consider God "some kind of supernatural power you can't describe." The other 4 per cent either are undecided or don't believe.

Only 32 per cent of people go to church each Sunday. Counting these, a total of 68 per cent go sometimes, most of them at least twice monthly, while 32 per cent never go at all.

Highest weekly attendance is in New England—45 per cent—and the lowest—22 per cent—on the Pacific Coast, where a big bloc of 50 per cent of the people never go to church.

However, 75 per cent of all adults consider religion "very important," 20 per cent say it's "fairly important," and only 5 per cent say it's "not very important."

regard for religion isn't so high among college graduates—only 61 per cent count it "very important"—or in big cities, 68 per cent. In rural areas, 84 per cent rate it tops.

An overwhelming proportion of adults, 90 per cent, believe Jesus actually lived. Only one per cent don't think so, while 3 per cent don't know.

A smaller majority, 80 per cent, consider Jesus either God or the Son of God. Again Catholics, 95 per cent, and Baptists, 91 per cent, had the highest percentages of this opinion.

Among all adults, 12 per cent consider Jesus just another great religious leader. This idea is held widely among college graduates, 27 per cent; throughout New England, 23 per cent; and among Jews, 66 per cent.

Paradoxically, however, a majority of Jews, 62 per cent, say they believe "in the Trinity—the Father, Son and Holy Ghost," although this is not formally a part of Jewish theology.

—By George W. Cornell
New York, July 25 (AP)
Buffalo Courier-Express
Sunday, July 26, 1953

THE WORLD THAT CRUCIFIES ITSELF

God Did Something To The World That Day On Golgotha. The world thought it was crucifying Jesus of Nazareth, a tumultuary and blasphemer. But God showed it up in its true character. In a very real and moral sense God brought the world to judgment along with the prince of this world, and the world actually crucified itself. Yes, the real criminal is nailed up like a felon on his well-deserved cross to die a long, lingering, horrible death. Some victims of crucifixion endured this living death for as long as three days and nights. "The world is crucified to me," Paul exults. Now I know you for what you are, O world. Your religion is hypocrisy. Your pleasures are apples of Sodom. Your honors are tinsel "hero" medals. Your beloved gold is the devil's dung. Your terrors, like your blandish-

nents, mean nothing to me. You are crucified, you Crucifier of God's holy Son! Though you still rage and lash out with your wicked fists you cannot get them off the nails; you, O world, are dying the death!

What World Is This That Is Being Crucified? By Its Own Sins? It is not that good beautiful world Jesus used so often in His matchless parables. It is the world He warned men against. It is the whole world that lies in wickedness, as St. John describes it: the world that is always crucifying. Always the crawny children with sore eyes and rotten teeth are being bred in its slums. Always its asylums and hospitals are over-crowded with what it calls "the by-product of civilization." Always the world's unholy ambitions and insatiable greed and devilish hatred is devastating the earth—men always crucifying themselves and each other in invincible ignorance and inveterate wickedness.

Can Man In The Highest Exercise Of His Unaided Wisdom And Power Ever Get Himself Off His Cross? God knows he tries hard enough, and we are rushing on to the hour when all the world will know that neither a gang of Moscow monsters nor a "Washington mess" can save the human race. Man's extremity is God's opportunity, what a great hope is enshrined in that old saying. But what a stupendous Fact is declared in the Gospel! Our God, who created us and who knows our frame that we are dust, has tempered His justice with mercy. Like as a father pitieth His children so the Lord pitieth the whole human race. On the Cross He accepted, absorbed, exhausted and triumphed over the worst that His rebellious children could do to Him. And now He bestows the benefits of that victory upon every penitent and believing soul. By faith in Him we become new creatures, no longer children of this wicked world but children of God, sons and heirs with Jesus Christ. God forbid that we should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

—Paul Wagner Roth

"The spectacle of a nation praying," says Edgar Hoover, "is more awe-inspiring than the explosion of an atomic bomb. The force of prayer is greater than any possible combination of man-controlled powers, because prayer is man's greatest means of tapping the resources of God. Invoking by prayer the mercy and might of God is our most efficient means of guaranteeing peace and security for the harassed and helpless people of the earth."

On The Dead Run

The train passenger in the seat across the aisle from me suddenly leaned over and said: "Do you know, this is one of the fastest runs in the country?"

"It is?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, "you see this train makes as few stops as possible. For example, it doesn't even stop to take on water for the engine. In the middle of this track, at a certain point when we go through Ohio, there is a metal trough. It is filled with water for a quarter of a mile or more. When this train reaches that place where the water trough is, the fireman presses a lever which drops a scoop and takes up the water as the train keeps going. No water stop, no pause—it just keeps going on the dead run."

After I had thanked the stranger for his information his words kept racing through my mind—"keeps going on the dead run."

Isn't that pretty much like a lot of folks try to do with their religious belief, I thought. Scoop it up on the dead run and keep going. No time for the soul's need. Too busy.

People are too occupied to give the life here—after some thought. Going to some church service perhaps two or three times a year is enough for them; scooping up enough religion then. The rest of the time they just keep going in pursuit of—who knows what?

Of these people Scripture says: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

No, you cannot become a real Christian "on the run!" Time must be given to receive, to hold, and to increase genuine, living Christian faith.

Maybe you are just like that train—just keeping on going; trying to make time. Why not stop once? Stop and give God a chance to enter your life. Stop to accept Christ's comforting offer: "Come unto Me; all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Stop and open your heart to receive Jesus as your Savior, and know that the burden of your sins is gone.

Stop and make this truth your own: "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—*Redeemer Record, St. Paul, May, 1953.*

Vacations

Are you one of the thousands and thousands, returned from a vacation?

If you are, have you ever thought, "When Does God Take a Vacation?" and, if He does, is He back on the job when I need Him?

THE CHURCH *at* WORK



On Choosing Sermons

Who should choose a preacher's sermon topics? Certainly not his hearers. No preacher worthy of the name preaches only on subjects which people like to hear. While the divine medicine chest provides the palatable remedies of comfort and encouragement, it also contains bitter correctives. To preach merely to please man is to dishonor God, condemn oneself, and lead people astray.

While the preacher should know his people's needs, while he should sympathetically minister to the sheep of God's pasture, he should have His message directly from the Lord through His inerrant Word. That message is given by the true prophet even though it is not desired, even though it may be rejected.

What people like in sermon material becomes valid subject matter only as the Lord definitely leads His spokesman to speak from the Word upon it. Every minister ought to face this matter conscientiously before God. On occasion, what people like may give a leading as to the will of God—more often it probably will not.

The subject has been brought to our attention by a recent survey entitled, "Tell us what sermons you like best." The most popular sermon theme in this survey was "How can I make prayer more effective?" Next in line was "How can I make the greatest contribution to life?" "Ways to increase faith" was third and far down the line, so far as percentage of replies, was "How religion can eliminate worrying."

Such a survey may be of help to the man who so lives in the clouds that he doesn't know what is going on in the world, but doesn't add a scintilla to the information a wide-awake pastor already has. Any minister who lives close enough to his people, who is in their homes in his pastoral calls, who has won their heart and confidence because of his acumen in the Word of God and his understanding of the human heart, will be able to apply God's

message to men's needs. To speak to the need of men, we must be close to God and men.—*Moody Monthly.*

A Back to School Party

Most children love school, but no sooner does the end of the long summer vacation come into view than from some one there comes the cry, "Back to school! Do I have to go?"

There are always those to whom the very thought of routine, study and discipline is a bugbear which, at least temporarily, shuts from sight the joys of school; and, in these enlightened days, there are many.

One of my friends tried the recommended idea of a back-to-school party for her children and their small friends. It worked wonders in getting them into the frame of mind to welcome "school again."

The plan she followed was to invite both mothers and children—they were mostly young mothers with young children—to the party. The mothers were asked to bring a gift for each of their children—something to wear the first day back at school—specially wrapped and, of course, a surprise.

Simple games were played in the garden or inside the house. A marshmallow was tied to a piece of string and the other end was pinned at the waist of each child. Then, while the child kept his hands behind his back, it was a lot of fun to toss it around until it was caught in the mouth.

The children greatly enjoyed and took most seriously the old stunt involving a suitcase packed brimful, shut and fastened. The contents were dumped out and had to be put back in such good order as would permit the case to be again closed and fastened.

A spelling bee, oddly enough, was entered into with zest and showed the children how much they had forgotten.

Refreshments were served at a long table. At each place was a nut cup consisting of a rectangular blackboard cut from black construction paper and measuring three and three-eighths inches by two and five-eighths inches. Holes, punched at intervals around the edge were threaded with strips of bright

d crepe paper. In a round hole cut in the center the blackboard was inserted a nut cup covered with red crepe paper which appeared over the top as piping. Scratched with white ink or chalk on the blackboard were a couple of small words— *cat, bat, c.*, with a figure or two.

The centerpiece was a large blackboard made in the same way, only minus the center holes and nut p. On the blackboard were piled simple school necessities such as pencils, pencil boxes and crayons. For every child there was a personalized pencil—ordered beforehand at the dime store for ten cents each.

This last, presented following the refreshments, was a surprising hit.

The refreshments — sandwiches, cupcakes baked with marshmallow inside and frosted, white, pink, yellow, green, lemonade or cocoa—were devoured with gusto.

To finish up, my friend, who is a Salvationist, brought out a pretty little promise box that had belonged to her grandmother. The children were very much interested when told what it meant. They rose and read their promises with due solemnity and a sweet sort of hush.

And not another grumble about going back to school was heard.—*Kathleen O'Connor, in "Warrior" Aug. 1953, page 9.*

Jesus Lights The Sabbath Lamp

This Picture Book by James S. Tippet, illustrated by Doris Stolberg, is for children from 3 to 6 years of age, has 24 pages, priced \$1.00, and was published by Abingdon-Cokesbury, August 10, 1953, and may be had in your local bookstore.

Int'l. Notes, 1953

Sunday School teachers, and Religious Education directors, will find use for this practical help, based on the improved uniform Int'l. Lessons for higher grades and Bible classes. Single subscriptions are \$1.00, issued quarterly.

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Credit Unions over the land, with more than 7-million members.

SNOWDEN-DOUGLASS SUNDAY SCHOOL

Lessons for 1954

Macmillan announces that the commentaries on The Int'l. S. S. Lessons, published annually since 1922, will be titled "The Douglass Sunday School Lessons," edited by Dr. Earl L. Douglass, since 1938. The 1954 Commentaries will include, for the first time, a selected listing of slides, film strips, and motion picture suggestions for each lesson.

Jesus IS Standing By

He walked the familiar road to Emmaus with the two; He stood on the seashore as He had often stood before; He came into the Upper Room where the disciples are gathered together behind bolted doors in fear; "He showed himself alive," as one of them said.

What do these appearances and disappearings mean? He was transferring their friendship and understanding from the *seen* to the *unseen* and *eternal*.

Jesus was teaching his disciples step by step that He was never far away. He was leading them to realize His presence without the need of eyes and ears. Death is not a door out of life, but into life that is endless.

When those who are dear to us pass beyond the range of our sight, they do not cease to be, they go forward into that roomier universe which Jesus called "the Father's house."

They are never far from us, and we shall know—and be known when we, too, pass through the gate of the morning.—*C. Irving Benson.*

The OPEN CHURCH

Since 1929 the Church of the Ascension (Episcopal), New York, has kept its doors open day and night for private devotions. It costs the congregation \$4,000 per year to provide a service of the "Open Door" policy. In fear that at some future time this arrangement might be discontinued for lack of funds, a campaign was started last fall to provide a special fund of \$125,000 to keep this "House of God" open twenty-four hours every day (incidentally, half of this sum has already been subscribed). Do people visit the church, outside of the hours when services are held? The record shows that in eight months of 1952 11,000 persons visited the church. In the NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM Dr. Roscoe T. Foust, pastor of Ascension, stated: "But if only one person a year came in, the plan of an open door would be justified."

Problems to Be Met

To keep a church edifice open presents difficulties. Volunteers or salaried persons are

required to guard against possible thefts, mischievous acts, visits by intoxicated persons who fall asleep; and even now and then an abandoned baby is found with a pew for a crib. However, the sexton of one church open daily said: "The mother who deserts her child in our church uses better judgment than the person who places the infant on a door step or garbage can."—J. F. E. Nickelsburg, *Exchange*.

Among Honor Books

The biography "Martin Luther" by May McNeer, illustrated by Lynd Ward, published by Abingdon-Cokesbury, was named one of the honor books in the Children's Book Festival Spring Contest sponsored by the New York Herald-Tribune.

Writing For Christian Publications

This is the title of a volume by Edith Tiller Osteyee, published by Judson Press, 206 pp., \$3.00. It is designed to help in the selection of markets, how to plan stories and articles, how to gather source materials, how to select specific magazines and direct the writing toward it, how to plan your composition, and how to prepare the copy.

Postcards For Local Parish Use

If you have not seen the four *Church Invitation* postcards issued by Standard Publishing Company, we urge you to write for samples and a catalog. The cards are printed in color, with the "Come to Church" featured, and the one inviting members to attend the communion features the original scene in the Upper Room. They will fill a need.

Great Devotional Classics

The following devotional classics, published by The Upper Room, 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 4, Tennessee, will fill a need in your pastoral duties, and will serve as gifts to those whom you visit from day to day.

1. Selections from the Writings of Soren Kierkegaard, arranged and edited by Thomas S. Kepler.
2. Selections from the Writings of John Bunyan, arranged and edited by Thomas S. Kepler.
3. Selections from the Journal of George Fox, arranged and edited by Thomas S. Kepler.
4. A serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, William Law, arranged and edited by Thomas S. Kepler.
5. Selections from the Writings of St. Francis of Assisi, arranged and edited by J. Minton Batten.

These are handbooks of 32 to 40 pages, 3 1/2 by 6 inches, readily carried in pocket or hand bag.

Serviceman's S.O.S.

I wouldn't mind going back to Korea so much," I overheard a young GI proclaim with bitterness, "if only the folks at home would co-operate a little more!"

Simultaneously, I thought of my own sons serving overseas. And you'd have thought of yours. Certainly we are concerned about these sons and husbands in the armed forces, aren't we? But do we prove it by co-operating in every possible way?

The following are some practical suggestions:

Concerning Your Letters

1. Practice writing letters that compromise between "We had the most rollicksome time in the world—too bad you couldn't be here," and "I can't stand this weather—and these debts are driving us crazy." Boys don't welcome long-faced complaints. Neither do they appreciate accounts of hilarious experiences which shout that you have forgotten them.
2. Deliver whatever grievous news is necessary but try to end the letter on a cheerful note.
3. Write as frequent—and as lengthy—letters as he asks you to write.
4. Do not dim his pleasure by nagging him for a reply to each letter of yours.
5. Love him, miss him and encourage him to "look forward."
6. Write newsy letters about family, friends, church, sports, and so on, and try to work in some humor in every letter.
7. Always include some prayed-over Scripture.
8. Keep a pad handy and jot down daily everything which would be of any interest to him. This does away with "I forgot if I told you—," saves time, and is more thorough.
9. As you read his letters circle or check all questions or confidences you may wish to comment on. Always answer all questions, and make the necessary comments promptly.
10. Enclose clippings and church bulletins often.
11. Keep his friends and acquaintances interested in writing letters to him.

Concerning Your Prayers

1. Fervently pray for your loved one every day and let him know it.
2. Do not mislead him with "we are praying for you," if you have been temporarily neglecting to pray.

Concerning Packages

1. Send a church calendar for him to hang up. You'll be surprised at the good he and his buddies will derive from it.
2. Mail numerous packages, but first find out what he wants and needs.
3. Don't send fragile or cluttersome gifts that he will feel "dutybound" to drag around with him.

Concerning His Home Front Possessions

1. Don't loan out his belongings in his absence. Keep his clothes, camera, books, sports equipment and so forth intact.
2. Check his belongings and clothes periodically for dust, mildew and moths.
3. Let him know that you deeply appreciate anything he sends home to you.

4. Carefully cherish the articles he sends home.
5. Remember where you put away the pictures he sent home. Or better yet, arrange them in albums.

By acting upon these suggestions you can in a larger measure contribute to your service boy's satisfaction—an essential contribution during this precious period of his life.—*Edith M. Scarboro, "Warrior," Aug. 1953.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

I cannot say "Our" if I live in a water tight spiritual compartment.

I cannot say "Father" if I do not demonstrate the relationship in daily life.

I cannot say "which art in Heaven" if I am so occupied with the earth that I am laying up no treasure there.

I cannot say "hallowed be Thy name" if I, who am called by His name, am not holy.

I cannot say "Thy kingdom come" if I am not doing all in my power to hasten its coming.

I cannot say "Thy will be done" if I am questioning, resentful of, or disobedient to His will for me.

I cannot say "on earth, as it is in Heaven"

if I am not prepared to devote my life here to His service.

I cannot say "give us this day our daily bread" if I am living on past experience.

I cannot say "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us" if I harbor a grudge against anyone.

I cannot say "lead us not into temptation" if I deliberately place myself in a position to be tempted.

I cannot say "deliver us from evil" if I am not prepared to fight it in the spiritual realm with the weapon prayer.

I cannot say "Thine is the Kingdom" if I do not accord the King the disciplined obedience of a loyal subject.

I cannot say "Thine is the power" if I fear what men may do, or what my neighbors may think.

I cannot say "Thine is the glory" if I am seeking glory for myself.

I cannot say "forever and ever" if my horizon is bounded by the things of time—*Exchange.*

Horn Folding Stage

Any room can become a convention hall, group gathering place, with little effort through the use of the new Horn Folding Stage, available through Brunswick-Balke-Collendar Company.

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HORN FOLDING STAGE

—Brunswick-Balke-Collendar



The Pulpit

+ + +

WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?

CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY

Acts 9:6—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

IT IS ALWAYS interesting to look at turning points and study the forces which have determined the course of a great life. Here it was a question which changed the man's life and turned it into new channels. When we consider who it was that asked the question, and the results and the issue of the question, we can say that this was the greatest question ever asked.

Never was there a man who up to that moment, felt less need of asking such a question. From his youth up he had been devoted to the study and the maintenance of the religion of Israel. Born a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and of the strictest sect of the Pharisees, his gifts and his character early marked him for distinction. He was sent up to study the sacred law at Jerusalem, where he sat at the feet of Gamaliel. In the Christian Gospel he saw only a blasphemous assault *on the faith of the fathers*, and in Jesus a wicked imposter. Everywhere he spoke and acted against the Christian disciples, and at the stoning of Stephen he held the garments of those who stoned that first martyr. Against all the followers of Jesus he was, he tells us, afterwards, "exceedingly mad," "breathing out threatening and slaughter" against them. Because of his zeal and energy he soon became the chief of the persecutors and the chief of the enemies of the Church.

But now came the great question and the great change. As he drew near to the hoary city of Damascus, with snow-crowned Hermon looming up in the distance, suddenly a bright light shone from heaven; a light so bright that it blinded him, and the fierce persecutor fell helpless to the ground. As he lay there he heard a voice which said, "Saul, Saul, why

persecutest thou me?" The astonished Saul replied, "Who art thou, Lord?" Then the voice said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." To this Saul answered, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Then he was told what he was to do. He had been chosen to know the Just One, to be a chosen vessel unto Christ and witness to his name before the Gentiles and the kings and the children of Israel, to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God that they might receive forgiveness of sins. He was also told that he was to suffer great things for the sake of the name of Jesus.

All this was the direct opposite of what he had been doing. Never was a man turned more completely about. Saul became Paul and began to write the greatest chapter in the history of mankind.

"What wilt thou have me to do?" This is an appropriate question at the opening of the New Year. In our best moments all of us, I think, would like to do the will of God. That is man's highest achievement. Even Jesus said that it was his "meat and drink to do the will of him that sent me." Where the will of God is done, there we have the Kingdom of God.

The Work of Life.

This is a question that is in the minds of young men and young women as they face life. "What wilt thou have me to do?" Here is the field of life and of time. The field is wide, but time is short, and I have only one life to live. How can I best invest my talent? How can I best invest my desire to serve God and do good to my fellowman? There is no joy superior to that of doing what one likes to do, and which also does good to man and serves God.

In asking this question about the work of life, we ought not to pass by what may be spoken of as the primary and fundamental

*First Presbyterian Church
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

callings of life, and without which there would be no other occupation. By this I mean the work of the laborer, the miner, the merchant, and storekeeper who distribute the necessities of life; and above all, or underneath all, the work of the farmer. How true it is what the wise man said of old, "Even the king is servant to the field." These fundamental callings of life can be followed, and at the same time the higher interests of life and the mind cultivated. At a gathering at Pomona College on the Pacific coast where the theme for the discussion was the so-called "humanities," one of the speakers said that all education ought to deal with practical things. He wanted his son to know how to do practical things, how for example to milk a cow. He was followed by another speaker who said that he too wanted his boy to know how to do practical things, and how to milk a cow; but he would also like him to know how to do some things that a calf can't do better.

Then there are the so-called learned professions; law, medicine, science, teaching, the ministry. All these offer high opportunities to serve one's day and generation. Great is the influence of a Christian teacher or professor, a Christian lawyer, a Christian doctor. At a banquet held in honor of certain celebrities in the athletic world, one of those who received great acclaim was Tyrus Cobb, the famous baseball star of twenty-five years ago. A minister said to Cobb as they were leaving the banquet hall, "It must be a source of great joy and pride to you to receive such praise as you have heard tonight, and to know that you have given entertainment as a ballplayer to so many thousands of people." At that a wistful look came over the face of the famous ballplayer as he said, "I wish that I had been a doctor. To have been able to heal diseases and relieve people of pain would have meant far more to me than the cheers and plaudits of the thousands in the baseball parks."

When it comes to the professions, I would like to say a word for the ministry. As a class they are the most poorly compensated of all professional men. And yet they have compensations of a higher order. It is the minister's opportunity to guide and inspire youth. An engineer who received sometime ago the highest decoration that an American engineer can receive, in accepting the medal said: "It was an old preacher down in Texas who kindled the fire in me." That sometimes the preacher will do. He will light the fire of ambition and high desire in the mind of some youth. It is his privilege, too, to counsel in the time of perplexity of temptation, to say a

word which will keep someone from taking the wrong turning and starting on a path which will bring misery and sorrow. As a reverend champion it is his office to cheer the sick, to encourage the discouraged, to comfort the sorrowing; and to soften, as far as it can be softened, the blow of death, and kindle a light of faith and hope in life's western sky. And what joy could be comparable to that of being used of God unto the salvation of an immortal soul?

But whatever work in life is chosen, and whatever calling a man follows, in that calling he can honor God and do good to his fellowman. For everyone of us there is a particular work to do. On the front of the house on the hilltop in Pittsburgh where Pittsburgh's famous astronomer and instrument maker, John Brashear, made his first telescopes, is this inscription, not original with Brashear, but one which he liked to quote for the benefit of young men: "Somewhere beneath the stars is a work which you alone were meant to do. Never rest until you have found it."

The Important Choices and Decisions of Life.

"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? This is a question which will often be asked by an earnest soul when facing some important choice or decision. No moral issue is involved; and yet the one about to make the decision realizes that it will have a profound influence upon his life. Take the matter of marriage. With regard to this step in life the question, "What wilt thou have me to do?" is ever timely; and especially so today, when about one out of every three marriages goes on the rocks. One of the reasons why they turn out that way is because this question has not been asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Too many couples today go from the cocktail party to the marriage altar, instead of from their knees. "Wilt thou go with this man?"

This is one of the most important questions of life. Will this man, will this woman, strengthen me or weaken me in my Christian life? That is something that ought not to be forgotten. But where the way is clear, and the conviction strong, then none ought to be afraid to answer that question the way Rebekah answered it of old, "I will go!"

Then there is the matter of some particular decision: the taking or the refusal of a certain post; the choice of a residence. Or it may be some difficult domestic matter where a decision must be made and a course followed; or some personal relationship. Who has not come face to face with these matters and said earn-

estly, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

I have heard people tell of how it was their custom to open the Bible at random, and of the comfort and guidance they found in some appropriate verse. When the great Russian writer Dostoevsky was on his deathbed and wanted to know whether this was the end or not, he asked his wife to bring him the old worn Bible, the only book which he was permitted to have when he was in exile in Siberia. Opening it at random, his eye fell upon the words of Matthew 3:15, the words of Jesus to John when he baptized him: "Suffer it to be so now." Dostoevsky took that to mean that the end of his life had come. I would not discourage anyone from such a use of the Bible. The best way to use the Bible, however, is to read it for the guidance which comes out of the great truths and principles which it proclaims. In matters where no moral issue is involved, and yet where you cannot be certain which way to turn, the best that you can do is to choose one course and leave the rest to God, trusting in his providence.

The Denials and Frustrations of Life.

When confronted by some denial or frustration in life, the soul will sometimes ask this question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "You have closed this door against me. Why is it so? What is it that thou wilt have me to do?"

That was a question that Paul must have asked not infrequently, for there were many frustrations and denials in his life. He had that thorn in the flesh. Three times he earnestly besought God to take this thorn from him. No doubt he wondered why God permitted such an affliction when he was so anxious to preach the Gospel. The prayer was not granted, the thorn was not plucked. But Paul learned that this thorn was God's final will for him, and it became to him a source of strength. When he was weak he said, "then am I strong." For that reason he could take pleasure in his infirmity and glory in it, that the power of Christ might rest upon him.

The supreme illustration of doing God's will by submitting to it in trust and love is that of Jesus Himself. He not only taught us to pray, "Thy will be done," but in the Garden of Gethsemane, in His sore agony when He knelt before His cup and prayed, "If it be possible let this cup pass from me," He concluded His prayer by saying, "Nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." So for you, too, it is possible to serve and glorify God by submitting to His will. Thus for all

eternity, by uniting your will with that of God, you become a co-worker with God.

In the Midst of a Wrong Course in Life.

Paul was on the wrong path and doing the wrong thing, although at that time he was not conscious of it, when he heard the voice of Jesus, "Why persecutest thou me?" and asked his great question, "What wilt thou have me to do?" The moment he knew he was wrong Paul turned about, asked God which way to go, and when the way was made plain, took it immediately. When you find yourself on a wrong path, and God has made plain His way and His will to you, then there is only one thing to do, and that is to take that way and to take it at once. Paul said that when he heard the voice of God, when he asked the question, "What wilt thou have me to do?" and got the answer, he was "not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." But alas, how many there are to whom, in one way or another, not perhaps by a blinding light like that which flashed and flamed on the Damascus highway, but in ways just as clear, God speaks His warning and shows His way, who are not obedient to that heaven-sent vision, but go on in the wrong path, a path which can lead only to sorrow and shame and misery.

There is one thing that stands out in all this record of Paul's conversion, and that is that God wants him to come to Christ. That was God's will for Paul. It is God's will for you and me too. For God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. That is the will of God for you. Have you done that? Have you repented? Have you come to Christ? For the New Year take this as your motto, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" There is only one thing in the future to fear, and that is not to do the will of God.

Use of Talent!

What a pleasure to note skillful hands and willing hearts in the promotion of our cause as Christians. Everyone of us has been given some special talent or gift. Think of some way in which you might make yourself useful in God's Kingdom. Consult the pastor for things to do in our church.

"Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee."

True merit is like a river, the deeper it is the less noise it makes.

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Mountain Full of Horses

WILLIAM GODDARD SHERMAN

"And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and behold, the mountain was full of horses . . ."—II Kings 6:17

DAYLIGHT at Dothan dawned with a threat of disaster. Elisha and his servant were being sought by the king of Syria, and it was discovered that they hid in Dothan. Learning their whereabouts, the Syrian monarch sent hosts of horses and chariots and surrounded the city. Early in the morning, so the Scripture relates, the servant of the man of God arose before his master, and saw that the enemy had them encircled. Frantically he called to Elisha, "Alas, my master! How shall we do?"

The response of Elisha came like a benediction from God Himself. "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Then he prayed that the eyes of the young man be opened, that he become aware of the resources God would supply. And his eyes were opened, and he saw. "And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

This is one of the Old Testament stories which it sometimes seems has been unduly overworked homiletically. Yet it needs to be told and retold so long as eyes remain blind to the resources of God which are at hand. For there are thousands today who become panicky in the face of circumstances life brings, and who cry in like manner with the servant of Elisha, "Alas, what shall we do?"

It is well to note the difference between the responses of the two men. Both Elisha and his servant were in the identical situation. It is probable that if one had been slain the other would have been also. They were in equal danger, and yet their attitudes toward the situation were exactly opposite. One was calm; the other was beside himself with anxiety. The difference lay in the religious faith of Elisha. He was confident that he was not alone; confident that there was present a Strength beyond his own.

I. Communion with God. One of the invisible resources which our heavenly Father grants to us is the privilege of communion with Him. The first contemplation of such a blessing strikes us with the idea that this surely is incredible. How can mere man dare hope to

commune with God face to face, or spirit with Spirit? Yet when we understand His nature we shall see that prayer is entirely logical. God is love, and love must be expressed. Love must have an object.

Communion with God is not difficult to experience because such communion depends not upon our own ability, but upon God's. We do nothing to establish the communion except to open our hearts. Christ has promised that if any will open the door, He will come in and dwell with him. It is to misunderstand prayer to assume that its success depends upon our own abilities and talents. This supremest of life's blessings, communion with the Infinite, depends upon God. We must meet the conditions, of course. But Jesus comes wherever He is wanted and invited, and wherever the conditions are met by a heart prepared to receive Him.

Thus we say that communion with God is entirely natural for man. It is as natural as breathing. It is more natural to breathe than not to breathe; it is more natural to pray than not to pray. Yet so many of us continue to long for communion with God, and still cast aside the possibility as being remote. Much of the spiritual vacuum of our day is a result not of our misunderstanding of our own need but our misunderstanding of God.

If we could only come to an awareness of the constant and continual availability of the Infinite we would not feel so alone. The servant of Elisha cried, "Alas, what shall we do?" When we are walking in the confidence that

Closer is He than breathing,

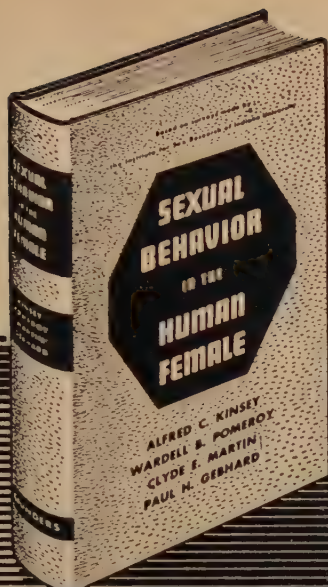
Nearer than hands or feet,

then we shall know what to do. We shall pray to our Father Who is in heaven, and He shall hear and answer our prayer.

II. Companionship with Christ. The disciples little realized the high privilege which was theirs. We often try to imagine what it must have been like to walk and talk with Jesus, to see Him perform His wonderful acts, and to witness the commanding Spirit which was His. And sometimes we are inclined to lose patience with the disciples for their blindness and lack of sensitivity. But before we ridicule too severely we must remember that we likewise have the privilege of His companionship, and that we are just as dull and insensitive.

Companionship with the Son of God is not a privilege confined to twelve disciples of ancient days. Today we are blessed with the promise of His companionship in a wider and

(See page 308)



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richer experience. They knew Him only in the flesh; we may know Him in Spirit. Yet how seldom do we avail ourselves of the high honor. How frequently do we abuse the privilege. How rarely do we walk in the tremendous conviction that we walk with Christ by our sides!

Sometimes we are not unlike the travelers on the road to Emmaus. They went a great distance, practically arriving at their destination, without realizing that it was Jesus Christ, the Risen Saviour, who walked beside them. There is no measuring the difference it would make to us in life if we walked life's roadways in the assurance that the Son of God accompanies us.

David Livingstone once said that it was the companionship of Christ, and that alone, which gave him the courage to go on in the face of overwhelming circumstances. Many times, the great missionary confessed, life would have been unbearable except for the promise of Christ, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Our prayer ought to be the prayer of Elisha, that our eyes might be opened to see the resources of God which continually surround us. This is part of the meaning of walking by faith. God does not draw a diagram of every spiritual resource available. We do not see them with our physical eyes, but the eyes of faith can see the Constant Christ and His resources which are always by our side through life. When the servant of Elisha opened his eyes, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire. When the Christian opens his eyes of faith he sees a greater help than these: he sees the Living Christ.

III. Comforting of the Spirit. We have all discovered what the servant of Elisha realized: Life's circumstances are too difficult for us to face in our own strength alone. When dawn came to Dothan that fateful morning, the servant of the man of God was in despair. He saw only disaster ahead. He knew that human strength by itself was inadequate.

So for each of us the truth remains: we cannot meet life alone if we would meet it victoriously. There are too many areas where the fortifying power of the Holy Spirit is required. To become convinced of this truth one needs only to consider the world's glittering temptations. A fun-loving society calls continually. If all the fun of society were harmless there would be no need for alarm, but the tragedy is that much of what the world calls pleasure destroys one's moral integrity, and ultimately his soul.

One of the old Gospel songs warns, "Yield not to temptation, for yielding in sin . . ." But let us be clear on this point: we need more than our own good intentions to keep us from yielding. The chorus of the song gives the clue:

Ask the Saviour to help you,
Comfort, strengthen, and keep you;
He is willing to aid you,
He will carry you through.

I knew a man who tried on several occasions to conquer the habit of drink, but the power of that evil habit was greater than the power of his own determination. He would succeed for a season, and then fall back into his alcoholism. It was not until he accepted Christ that he fully conquered the habit. He had the power of the Spirit then, and he no longer fought in his own strength alone. Whenever he was tempted to submit to the evil desire, he prayed in these words, "Jesus, help me to win." The power of God can do the same for any who are willing to surrender to Him.

The Spirit is sent not only to conquer, but also to comfort. One of the last promises Jesus made was that he would not leave His disciples comfortless. Today there are many who need the comforting presence of the Spirit of Love. Some are facing the bitter loneliness of a life without a loved one. Some are bearing the pain of an incurable illness. Others are perplexed by cares and concerns which burden the soul beyond endurance. God is aware of our sorrows and our sadness; He has sent a Comforter to stand by our side.

We do not need to pray for spiritual resources beyond what God has already granted. We need a greater faith, a keener sensitivity, to become aware of those resources at our command. The servant of Elisha became perturbed and panic-stricken, because he thought the circumstances would crush out his very life. But Elisha, that man of God, prayed that the young man's eyes be opened. And behold, the mountain was full of horses! Resources were at hand far in excess of his realization.

Today if you will open your eyes of faith you will discover spiritual resources from your heavenly Father that will enable you to live victoriously, for you will live in the strength of your Saviour.

Almost-ers!

The rich young ruler, in his famous interview with Christ,

Asked the *right* question,
Asked it of the *right* person,
Received the *right* answer,
But he made the *wrong* choice.

—Billy Graham.

WHY?

ROGER J. NEEB

Text: Judges: 6-11-14.

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

TODAY we are about to consider the most mysterious word of the Bible. What would you answer in a poll were the question concerned with the most mysterious word in the Bible? Would your answer be *Death*, the end, after which many believe there is nothing, the short, curt word which spells

doom to our physical bodies? Or, would you choose the opposite, *Eternity*, the infinite, the never ending, the thing which our time and space conscious minds cannot comprehend? But there is more. What is the word, that if we knew the answer, we would know as much as God? What is the word which has fallen so many times from the lips of Christians and non-Christians as they saw the world over-run by injustice and wickedness? The question pronounced by so many believing souls when God's hand lay heavy upon them? The word of mothers at the sight of the lifeless form of their child? Job spoke it, when the Lord took his possessions and family leaving him deso-

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late; David said it, when he thought God had forgotten him; Elijah and even Jesus said it.

The word is WHY! One of the first words a child learns and understands and uses most throughout life. "WHY!", the mysterious word in the Bible and in human speech, the symbol of the unknown and the unknowable in human life and experience; WHY! the word upon which both progression and regression hinge. When the medical man or scientist asks, WHY? it is to go forward and improve; the same question from the lips of a layman leads to regression and despair. WHY, the word which key-noted the beginning of Gideon's actual living, as is recorded in the text for this morning, Judges 6:11-14, let us read . . .

In the other questions of this series, we have always gone to the Bible to learn what God said in answer to these questions. To our question of today, however, God does not give an answer, but He does have plenty to say about it and a great deal to change our entire lives. Let us look at the story of Gideon and permit history to speak to us, have meaning for us, actually live as it should. After all, God had reason for placing this story here so we might profit from reading it, reflecting on it, and making Gideon's experience our own. To have history tell us her story, we must speak the same language; history either must be moved up to our time, or we must transport ourselves back into the historic scene. As we move back across the thousands of years, we must set the scene; the valley of Ephraim lies before us, the terrain similar to that of Western New York, although with far less vegetation. In this valley at threshing time, the most common sight would be men, women and children dressed in gay, festive costume, bright color everywhere,—the oxen going round and round, threshing the grain, and the gaily attired peasants throwing the grain into the air for the wind to carry off the chaff. We may compare this ancient festival to the present-day festival of Aksarben in Omaha, originated in gratitude and thanksgiving for a good crop; we may liken it to original *Thanksgiving Day* of the Pilgrims, and the days of festivity in towns and villages along the seacoast as sailors return.

Returning to our story of Gideon, the color, the joy, the festive spirit has vanished; there is no gaiety, no family, no community gathering, no oxen beating out the grain,—for the dreaded Midianites besiege the land, and all must be done secretly. The enemy has tried to destroy the worship of the true God, by offering idols in His stead. Now, we can realize more clearly why Gideon is downhearted, say-

ing, "If the Lord be with us why then is all this befallen us?" in answer to the spoken words of the angel, "The Lord is with thee."

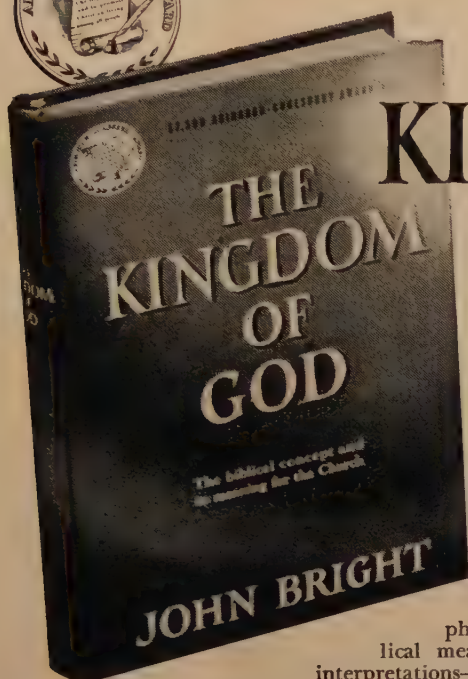
Gideon's "WHY then is all this . . ." spoken in that remote glen, has been echoed countless thousands of times over the intervening years. Every moment of every day Gideon's question, "WHY then is all this . . ." is asked of God, from hospitals, open graves contrasting the flowers of springtime with death, from troubled souls in quiet Gethsemanes all over the world, from a thousand battlefields,—we hear the cry, "Why then is all this . . ." Why does God permit this? Why does He permit evil men to curse the lives of God-fearing souls? Why does God permit the modern Midianites to destroy and prosper? Why does God seem silent as the stars which look down on the woes of the world of men? WHY? WHY? WHY!

Pause with me for just a moment, and think of the "WHY'S" you have asked of God during the past week alone. They are not all about misfortune. It may be a "Why!" about a certain habit we have acquired that is troubling us; we know it is bad, but we have been unable to correct it; it may be a question about the growth and development of children, who may not be following the pattern we have designed for them; it may be that we do not act as we should in our role as parents. We may cry "why?" when a young man or young woman is taken from this life, instead of the aged and infirm. Too, we may wonder why *good fortune* has come our way; why we "got a break" and another seemingly deserving didn't fare equally well. Life's problems are not all big problems; many are very small, seemingly insignificant, yet they bring to mind the "Why!" We can list these questions by the hundreds, as we think again of the hours turned into history now. But, are we to *know* the answers to all these puzzling questions? God said that it is good for us to remember that "now we know in part, we prophesy in part; we see as through a glass darkly." An aged elder in a church once said of all the questions, "WHY!" "If I knew that, I would know as much as God himself."

So God, in His wisdom, does not tell us *why* everything happens as it does. He does, however, tell us what we are to do about what happens. Remember, we are going to re-live the story of Gideon, so we may learn the lesson God taught Gideon. Gideon is depressed, feels forsaken, thinks all is hopeless, but the words recorded here tell us "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt *save Israel* from the hand of the Midianites!" Aren't we all Gideons,



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you and I? The angel said, "The Lord is with thee"; actually he could have said, "the Lord is with you all, all you Christians." Our answer is so much like that of Gideon, "Oh, my Lord, if the Lord be with us, *why* then is all this befallen us?" Our main concern seems to be, why what has happened did happen. Worry, worry, concern, about something that happened in the past,—yesterday, last week, or even longer,—instead of trying to do something about what is *present* now. We wonder why God has permitted so many of our young men to go to war and be maimed or die, instead of doing something about it. We wonder why communism is such a menace to our way of living, but what are we doing about it? We are curious regarding the many accidents instead of working for safety; we wonder why it has to be so hot, instead of using that energy to keep cool. From the petty

to the complex, we are concerned with *why* things are as they are, instead of changing them,—“Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites.”

What would happen if the highway engineer did this, when he finds the progress of the undertaking obstructed by a steep hill? He could sit down and say, “why does this hill have to be here? why couldn’t it be level?” Instead, he accepts the fact of the obstruction, and does things that will remove it. Here he finds a hill; the remedy lies in removing it. Take the case of a doctor who finds you have appendicitis; he does not sit down and wonder *why* you have the ailment. He accepts the fact that you do have appendicitis, and does what is necessary to gain the desired goal,—health.

Perhaps that sounds silly and far-fetched, but that is what we do about other things in our lives. I fear that we are a thoughtless lot,

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and most of the time we are a *WHY?* kind of people instead of a "Therefore" type seeking the way forward. This is exactly what Gideon was told, "Go in this thy might and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: Have not I sent thee?" All too often this happens in the realm of the Kingdom of God also. We are prone to ask *Why* all do not know about God and His sacrifice of Jesus for the sins of the world, instead of going out and telling this to the people who have not heard it, or making sure there are ways for them to hear of God's love. We also ask the question, "Why did God permit sin to come into the world in the first place?" Who knows? or who cares? Sin is here, and the question is "What are we doing about it?"

The angel told Gideon to go out and save his people, saying, "Have not I sent thee?" This, too, is our comfort and consolation. The Lord is with us. Of course, there are many things that trouble us, hinder us, cause discomfort, discourage us and try our souls,—but how is anything proven, unless it is tested? Life is our testing ground, and there is no end to the obstacles to be overcome. Gold is purified by heat and fire; trouble tests the strength of our faith; temptation and tribulation are the fires that purify and strengthen our faith in God's love.

When things seemingly reach bottom, really get rough for us, let us think of the darkest hour this earth has known, when God seemed to be absent, and the powers of darkness had their way and their will? It was when the Son of God hung on the cross on Golgotha, and from His lips came the cry, "My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me?" Yet, out of that

darkest hour comes the world's brightest light and upon which rests the soul's fondest hopes. Now we know that God was not absent when Jesus hung on the Cross; God was Himself a part of the greatest of all of life's dramas, reconciling the world unto himself.

No matter how dark things may seem, how evil the world may appear, let us resolve not to moan about it, wondering *WHY* it happened; let us go forward and do something about it, knowing that He is with us, as he was with Gideon; that He says to us, "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" Let us pray for strength to keep in mind that God is with us, that He sends us to overcome evil in His name. Our Heavenly Father does not ask why each individual sinned, but he knew that all had sinned and sent His son to atone for the sins, that we might all be saved. As we think of what we do to help others in their troubles and temptations, let us listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, speaking to us; He reminds us that He gave His life for us! "Go in this thy might . . . Have not I sent thee?"

Now may the peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

(This sermon was preached in Faith Lutheran Church, East Aurora, N. Y., by Student Neeb, Concordia Lutheran Seminary.)

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Not So "Mere!"

The story was told recently of a small boy, who returned home from school and told his father that he was "second in his class." Top place was held by a girl. "Surely, Johnny," said the father, "you're not going to be beaten by a *mere* girl!"

"Well, you see, Father," said Johnny, "girls are not nearly so *mere* as they used to be."

This little incident is just one of many things in life that we may not understand, or that we just take for granted, without giving the facts any thought.

There are few things in life, actually, that we think of as "*mere*" happenings, because everything that we do, everything that we think, everything that we learn is important, not only to each one of us, but it is important to everyone in our family, everyone in the community, in the school, in our Church, and of course it is important to God. God gave us the power to do things; He gave us the important desire to want to do things, not because others do them, but because we have the ability and a very great reason for doing things that are right, and of help to ourselves, to others, and of course to God.

Some of us seem very important in our own groups, our professions, because people have heard about us; maybe because we can do something very well that few others can, such as sing, play instruments, or we may be very good at playing games, or as leaders in some field. Those of us who think about it know that we accomplish these things, because we were given talents, or wisdom, or strength, above that which others have. Now, of course, it stands to reason that if we have more wisdom than others, we are supposed to act more wisely than others; if we can run, or swim better than others, that is the field where we are expected to do better than others.

Many people think if they have more money, more talent, more strength than their *mere* companions, that they are just lucky and do not have to put forth any struggle, all they have to do is tell others what to do, and just suit themselves about their own affairs. Actually God didn't make any *mere* boys or girls, He made each one just the way He knows in His love and wisdom that they can do most for others, for Him, and for themselves, and every boy and every girl is just as important as every other one. It takes many of us a very, very long time to learn this, and sometimes we must have considerable of a shock before we do

A PARSON PONDERERS



Rupert Brooke, the young poet who had suddenly arrived, enjoyed a memorable day with Henry James, then a veteran novelist. The parting word was never forgotten by the younger man: "He told me not to be afraid of being happy."

This advice has a special relevance for young parsons. "The pursuit of happiness," an inalienable right of laymen may be denied to the clergy. Among those who have been starched before they were washed, the laughter of parsons is regarded with suspicion. The sad countenance, the solemn tone, the cultivation of dullness as a virtue, the mind that never lights up—these are in many circles considered the badges of the cloth.

Strange how this idea ever secured any acceptance, especially when the warning is ever before us: "Be not of a sad countenance." Without doubt, the air of seriousness gives a false impression of depth of mind. The merry heart is suspected as being a mark of frivolity. "I tried to be a philosopher," said someone, "but cheerfulness was always breaking in." The cultivation of happiness may slow down into the cult of sappiness.

Real happiness, on the contrary, stems from thought and foresight. Joyousness can't be guaranteed, but measures can be taken to avoid unhappiness. A planned financial program will do much to prevent future anxieties.

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learn it. Here is how one man learned it. He was a caretaker in a place where there was a great Freiburg Organ, and of course he felt good about being intrusted with the responsibility. One day a man came to see the organ, and asked humbly if he might play the organ. The caretaker refused. He did not know the man, but he did know the organ was of great value. After more conversation, the visitor convinced the caretaker that it would be all right to allow him to play the great organ. The *mere* man played and the caretaker was spell-bound. The *mere* man who had asked to touch the great organ and had been refused was Mendelssohn. Of course, the caretaker was sorry, and he told the visitor that "it was the most wonderful music that had ever come out of the organ." There are so many things in life that way. We make wrong choices, and wrong decisions, because we think only about things and what they mean to us. When we learn to think about every boy, every girl, every person as being important to God, all and each with gifts of their own, we learn that there are *no mere* people anywhere; they are all important and like the caretaker, we learn that "they can do the most wonderful things," if we just give them the chance.

Let's Keep Trying!

Is there anyone that we know who has an *easy job*? Let's think before we answer. Is there anyone who does anything worthwhile in life easily?

Many of us think that people who win in any undertaking do not have to work hard; we think it just *happens* to them, not us! Is that true? How about those who win in athletics; how about those who are leaders in any community; how about those who receive promotions; who win honors?

Of course, no one wins anything, not anything in life without working for it. Yes, a few people get things because someone does not understand this unchangeable law of life, but they and we know that it does them little good. People who are given money they did not earn, and do not know how to use, are not fortunate. It does not last long, when you do not know its value, and those who waste or squander things would be better off if they had to work like most of us do. That is the way God made us, and He wants us to learn *how* to do things for ourselves, and in our own way. Then we learn and grow and are ready for the next job ahead of us.

How do you suppose anyone learns how to build a house? How to cook a meal? How to raise sheep? Chickens? How to train

children in the home, in our schools, in our churches? We learn by studying and doing it.

Does everyone remember this, and learn all they can? No, the bulk of us don't, we just do what is easy, and get enough to eat, earn what we need to buy what we think we want, and then we stop. There are some people among us who are not satisfied that way, they want to go on, learn and do all they can; all that God gives them wisdom, health, and strength to do. That is how leaders in any work, or profession are made.

One day, so the story goes, two frogs found they had jumped into a cream can, standing near a pump in a dairy-man's yard. They tried to jump out, when they found they were trapped, but the top of the can was too far away. They kicked around in the cream for awhile, and one said, "It's just no use. We're never going to make it, and there's no sense in getting all tired out and all worked up for nothing," and so he sank to the bottom of the can. The other frog did not have anyone to tell him, "It's no use," and he kept on kicking in case a way could be found to reach the top. Before long, he found he was sitting on a pat of butter, and when he kicked he found he had something solid under him, from which to jump. And, will you believe it, he tried and jumped right out of the can, and made a four point landing on the pump platform outside! Now, you judge which is the better off, the frog who kept on trying, or the frog who said "It's of no use!"

Norman Vincent Peale, D.D., Tells us—

"Say 'I don't Believe in Defeat,' and *mean* it!

"Expect the Best and Get It!"

"A Mind at Peace Generates Power!"

"Try Prayer Power!" Think about God, Talk to Him in your own Words, especially the things you are grateful for; ask Him to guide you in using your energies to do His will.

"Try to live in harmony with your surroundings; Life has a tempo, and you will do well to get in step with life."

"Learn to laugh; it's not so hard!"

"Remember, each of us has as much to do with good health as the medical profession has. We can think ourselves sick, and we can think ourselves well again."

Worry is to life and progress what sand is to the bearings of a perfect engine.

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Light and Salvation

Text: *Psa. 27:1—"The Lord is my light and my salvation."*

There is an old story about a lamplighter who was going about his usual routine many years ago of putting out the lights on the street in those dark hours of the night just before the break of day. On this particular occasion he had a visitor who walked along with him and watched him as he did his work. It was cold and damp and dreary. And as the lamps were put out one by one the night seemed to grow darker. It was a disagreeable experience for the visitor, and he couldn't understand how the lamplighter could be so cheerful about it. Finally he asked him, "Doesn't this job ever depress you, always putting out the lights and bringing back the darkness?" "Well," said the lamplighter, "don't forget, there is always a light ahead of me to cheer me and to lead me on." "Yes," said the companion, "but what do you have to cheer you when you have put out the last light in the street?" "Oh," said the lamplighter, "you don't understand. The light that is always ahead of me is not one of these, but the one toward which I am working: the dawn! I am only putting out these lights because they won't be necessary anymore when that one comes."

If modern man would look for the dawn of salvation, he would learn to pray; "O send out Thy light and Thy truth!" he wouldn't feel the need of all these artificial lights with which he is trying so hard to dispel the darkness and the distortion of his world. He could put them out, one by one, knowing that the Sun of righteousness would be his Saviour.

Stopped Too Soon

Text: *Phil. 3:14—"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."*

A man staying in a hotel, so the story goes, found there was a boy occupying the room above him. One night the man heard a noise thump, seemingly on the floor above him. The next day he told the boy about the noise, and asked, "Did you fall out of bed last night?" The boy said he did. "How did that happen?" asked the man. "Oh," said the boy, "I think I stopped where I got in."

In the Christian life, if you stop where you get in, you tumble off!



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Nature of the Godhead

Text: 1 John 5:7—"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these are one."

If you have ever studied chemistry, you know that H_2O is a symbol for something. At first we say it is a formula for water. But it is also a formula for ice and steam, depending on the temperature. While ice, water, and steam are all the same in substance, being composed of two parts of hydrogen to one part of oxygen, they are very different in the work they do. The Godhead is something like that. God is Spirit in nature, as Jesus said to the woman at the well in Samaria in John 4:24. But God is revealed to us as a Father who purposes, as a Son who co-operates with the Father to execute his will, and as a Holy Spirit who takes the revelation of the Father and the Son and makes it clear and effective in the lives of believers. This God is eternal three-in-one, always transcending time but always entering into the experience of men and women in time. Therefore the good news He makes possible is for us just as real as it was for persons in the first century.

Where Is Your Treasure?

Text: Matt. 6:21—"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

The story goes that there was a countryman walking with a friend in a New York street. Though the street-cars were whizzing by in all directions, the countryman stopped and said, "Hark, there's a grasshopper." The New Yorker laughed at him. "You don't mean to tell me that you can hear a grasshopper in all that noise." But the countryman did mean that, and he found the grasshopper too. "You see," he said, "I am interested in grasshoppers, so I hear them. People find what they are looking for, more often than not." And he said that he would put his theory to the test. He took a coin from his pocket and quietly dropped it on the pavement so that it tinkled. Half a dozen people immediately turned around. "There you are," he said. "You people are interested only in money. That's why you heard that coin."

The trouble is, as Jesus knew so well, that people who treasure the wrong things grow into the wrong sort of people. People who hoard money become miserable and mean. People whose treasure is their ambition become callous and selfish; they must climb to the top of the tree, no matter how many people suffer as they climb. People who are always worrying what others are thinking of them often become not worth thinking about.

Deliverance Through Christ

Text: Rom. 6:22—"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

I came across the following story some years ago, but have not been able to find the source. It is reported that near Tarsus, where Saul was born, there was a tribe of people who had a most terrible penalty which they inflicted upon any man who was a murderer. Back in those hills of Asia Minor, it is said, there was the custom of fastening the body of the victim to that of the killer. If a man murdered another, the tribesmen took the dead body of the victim and put it upon the back of the murderer, fastening shoulder to shoulder, back to back, thigh to thigh, arm to arm, and then driving the murderer with his horrible burden of death, forth from the community. So tight were the bonds that there was no possibility of his freeing himself from the dead, and after a few days the death in the body of death began to communicate itself to the living flesh of the murderer. As he stalked the fields and paths of his land there was none to help him. He had no hope of relief, and only the frightful prospect of gangrenous death for himself. He could well cry in horror, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

The believer who has become aware of the nature of true holiness by the incoming presence of the *Holy Spirit* must desire holiness with a most earnest desire. When that divine holiness makes him aware of his own innate carnality there is a cry of horror that comes from his renewed being. Must the renewed "I" be forced to dwell in close contact with a body of death? The answer, which is derived not only from the Epistle to the Romans, but from the whole of the N. T. revelation is that there is deliverance, and it comes to us from God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

You Can Conquer Sin

The following is part of a letter received by Clarence E. Macartney from a person who was led through the grace of God to attend the service at which the sermon, "You Can Conquer Your Past," was preached. (See page 185, June 1953).

Thank you for your sermon "You Can Conquer Your Past." For the first time in thirty years I felt the heavy load of an old and terrible sin drop from my heart. I, as the man in the sermon, knew I was a worse traitor than Judas, because I too had a Christian home and training. I had confessed my sin to God; I had implored His forgiveness; but Satan has always whispered that my pleas were useless, that I was only deceiving myself.

I thank God that I went to church that night in spite of all the things that seemed to say, "It is too far, you have sickness in the house," and many other obstacles. Always I shall remember the tender words of love and the wonderful promises of forgiven and forgotten sin. I left that service with such a sense of joy and freedom that no words will ever be found to tell it.

I thank God again for His mercy.

Friends in Deed

War or peace, the spirit of Quaker service continues to work. To the long list of humanitarian undertakings of the American Friends Service Committee is being added a new medical relief project in Korea.

Founded in 1917, AFSC has worked in more than 20 countries in a variety of relief, rehabilitation, educational and other projects. Its present efforts range from technical aid in India to housing improvement in Philadelphia. Last year it shipped abroad 600,000 pounds of food and drugs and 1,000,000 pounds of clothing and textiles.

AFSC grinds only one axe: The relief of suffering and the promotion of good will among individuals, groups and nations. But it cannot function without contributions from the public. It deserves generous and continuing support and offers in turn the assurance that whatever is given will be spent well in the cause of peace and humanity.

Alabaster Boxes

Matt. 26:6-13.

Do not keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up until your friends are dead. Fill their lives with sweetness. Speak approving, cheering words while their ears can hear them and while their hearts can be thrilled and made happier by them; the kind things you mean to say when they are gone, say them before they go. The flowers you mean to send for the coffins, send to brighten and sweeten their homes before they leave them. If my friends have alabaster boxes laid away, full of fragrant perfumes of sympathy and affection, which they intend to break over my dead body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours and open them that I may be refreshed and cheered by them when I need them. I would rather have a plain coffin without a flower, a funeral without an eulogy, than a life without the sweetness of love and sympathy. Let us learn to anoint our friends beforehand. Post-mortem kindness does not cheer the burdened spirit. Flowers on the coffin cast no fragrance backward over the weary way.—*American Tract Society.*

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THE INTERPRETER'S BIBLE, Volume 2, Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$8.75.

Published September 14, 1953, volume 2 will cover Biblical books of Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth and I and II Samuel, presenting the full texts in both the King James and Revised Standard Versions, with exegesis and exposition on each verse, and introductory articles on each of the 8 books.

This is the second Old Testament volume to be published, and the fifth volume in the eventual 12-volume set of the commentary project as a whole, and presents a wide cross section of the varied forms and purposes of the O. T. writings:

Leviticus, the Book of Ritual, throws light upon the archaic ceremonies of a people acutely conscious of the presence of the living God.

Numbers dramatizes the historical epic of the years between Sinai and the Plains of Moab, making plain the divine origin and call of Israel.

Deuteronomy, containing the creed of Israel, is the only book to attempt a thorough exposition of the Hebrew faith.

Joshua tells the story of the conquest, allotment, and occupation of the Promised Land—the painful processes through which Israel became a nation.

Judges is the essential historical and theological link between the time of the invasion of the Promised Land and the rise of the kingdom.

Ruth witnesses to the truth that "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him . . . is acceptable to him."

I and II Samuel tell the well-known stories of Samuel, Saul, and David.

Its writers are:

John Bright, Professor of Hebrew and Interpretation of the Old Testament, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va., whose book, *THE KINGDOM OF GOD*, won the 1952 Abingdon-Cokesbury Award.

Albert George Butzer, minister of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Buffalo, N. Y., since 1932.

George B. Caird, Professor of New Testament Literature and Interpretation, McGill University, Montreal.

James T. Cleland, Professor of Preaching and Preacher to the University at The Divinity School, Duke University, Durham, N. C.

Phillips P. Elliott, minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, N. Y., since 1932, and member of the Board of Directors of Union Theological Seminary, New York.

Ganse Little, pastor of the Pasadena Presbyterian Church, Pasadena, Calif., and president of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, USA.

John Marsh, Professor of Christian Theology, The University, Nottingham, England, a Congregational minister and former professor at Mansfield College, Oxford.

Nathaniel Micklem, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, England, and Professor of Dogmatic Theology.

Jacob M. Myers, Professor of Old Testament at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa.

Pierson Parker, Professor of New Testament Literature and Interpretation at General Theological Seminary, New York, since 1940.

John C. Schroeder, Chairman of the Department of Religion, John A. Hooper Professor of Religion, and Master of Calhoun College at Yale University.

Henry H. Shires, Bishop Suffragan of the Episcopal Diocese of California and former Dean of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley.

Joseph R. Sizoo, Professor of Religion, George Washington University, Washington, D. C., and Past President of New Brunswick Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, N. J.

Louise Pettibone Smith, Professor of Biblical History at Wellesley College.

G. Ernest Wright, Professor of Old Testament History and Theology at McCormick Theological Seminary and editor of the *Biblical Archaeologist*.

RELIGION AS SALVATION. By Harris Franklin Rall. Abingdon-Cokesbury. 254 pp. \$3.00

Like the rest of Dr. Rall's books this one is a delight to read. It is clean, untechnical, and at the same time profound and deeply interesting, dealing as it does with the most important of all subjects, man and his relation to God. Dr. Rall is truly evangelical without being fundamentalist, biblical but not biblicatrous, logical and systematic but not hide-bound. Remarkable is his gift for analysis and clear practical exposition. It would be hard to find a better book on Christian theology for church people to read, a theology which rightly appeals to heart and will besides the intellect. For preachers and teachers it is a rich mine of suggestive material.

The author deals in Part One with man, his origin and nature, the likeness of God in him, and moral freedom. In Part Two the subject is sin, its nature, origin and propagation, its consequences in guilt and punishment; in Part Three, with salvation, the remaking of man, the ways of help, symbol and sacrament, the work of the Spirit, the Church, salvation in history, what we may hope for. There is a bibliography and index of names.

Here is a complete setting-forth of Christian theology in small compass, vital, warm and positive, timely, full of apt illustration, fair statement and appraisal of other points of view. All this is not to say that your reviewer has an amen for every statement. But this book meets admirably the great need of presenting the Christian faith in terms that can be understood in our day. It will be a great help too in enabling the believer to give a reason for the faith that is in him. And finally, it points sharply and definitely to the one solution of the manifold problems of our day.—Paul H. Roth

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY, by H. C. G. Moule. Baker. pp. 180. \$2.25

The late Bishop Moule, who was a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church and became the celebrated Bishop of Durham, has given us in this volume a devotional study of the "dying letter of St. Paul." The author was famous for his exegetical studies. The purpose of the book is to take the verses of Paul's letter in sequence and give understanding of their meaning. The study is so divided that it is not only easy to read but notates the important factors of the verses by the headings of chapters.

The chapters are short, consisting for the most part of not more than two or three printed pages. The book consists of forty-eight chapters. The author does not deal especially in historical backgrounds. The purpose is stated succinctly. He declares it was a "short devotional study of the dying letter of Paul."

Some of the chapter titles are, "The Crisis of the Church," "A Call to Holy Courage," "The Preaching of the Word," and "The Wreath of Victory." A careful study of this exegetical analysis of the second letter to Timothy is spiritually profitable.—A. Wallace Copper

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF INFANT BAPTISM. Sacrament of the Covenant of Grace. By Pierre Ch. Marcel, Pastor of the French Reformed Church. James Clark and Co., London. pp. 256. 15 shillings net.

The author is a staunch representative of the Reformed theology and presents a thorough, systematic closely reasoned argument based wholly upon the Bible, Old Testament and New, from that point of view. To him it is impossible to treat the sacrament of Baptism *in abstracto* or taken by itself. One must have first a view of the whole theological field. Baptism must not conflict with the clear themes of Scripture: it must agree with the truths clearly revealed. To know the palm of the hand one must know the wrist and the arm and the fingers it holds and coordinates. A study of baptism which is too specialized will always be a bad study.

On this basis a full half of the book consists of a general study of the sacraments, and of the Covenant of Grace, which is the key and center of the whole treatment. The latter half, on the basis of the principals established from a study of the Covenant in both Testaments, treats Baptism as the Sacrament of the Covenant of Grace; under the two divisions of The baptism of adults and proselytes; the meaning and significance for adults of the baptism they have received; and the baptism of children.

The author contends for infant baptism on the authority of Scripture. Resting on the same authority he answers objectors. His position is that the Covenant includes the children of believers and that this is the sole basis of their baptism. Earnest admonition is given on the responsibility of Church, parents and children for the baptized children of the Covenant. It is a long time since such an elaborate study of infant baptism has appeared. It has instruction and a real message even for those of other theological backgrounds, and for those who have neglected this sacrament of our Lord it should be an awakener.—Paul H. Roth

Greatness

(From page 295)

have won an immortality by a legacy but he did win an everlastingness in the shape of his marble angel forms and prophet figures. A person who carves a statue, writes a book, paints a picture, composes a song, is a benefactor of mankind and cannot be measured in terms of dollars and cents. There are successful rascals and there are unsuccessful rascals. Those who live between the borderland of ruffianism and civilization.

Greatness is not often in the headlines. It is not advertised by adjectives or displayed in neon lights. More often it is found in some attic of starvation, seeking the elusive word or phrase that, at last put on paper, shall preserve forever, embalmed in printer's ink some imperishable dream or deathless vision. Poets are born but not always bought. Greatness,

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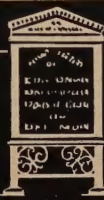
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People are lonely because they build walls instead of bridges.

too, may lurk in some remote laboratory, removed from the noise of the city, the researcher and analyst who without thought of danger to self, isolates germs and imprisons microbes and ponders the mystery of virus so that the world might be rid of some dread disease. Such people do not look for fame. They already have it. They count not their own lives dear. The tree or the bush is there. Fame is the bud and fruit on the greenery.

A woman told her pastor that she had been having trouble with her eyes. Her vision was not what it used to be. So she consulted an "optimist" and after that she saw better than ever before. We do not always see as we should, or what we should. We need to go to some *optimist* who makes the picture and situation more clear. Many of us see as through a glass darkly. It was said of the painter Whistler that he always saw things as nobody else saw them until he revealed them. That is the way Jesus saw things and pointed them out to others. "Whosoever will be great . . . whosoever will be chief, let him be your servant." Until that day when all have a true perspective of right and wrong, understand the difference between real and shoddy, gold and brass, true and false, we shall continue to build churches, establish altars, fling steeples against the sky. There is still a demand for "the foolishness of preaching." The difficulty has seldom been to believe that the WORD came. The difficulty has always been to believe that the WORD comes. It is easier to believe in a revelation that was. It is not so easy to believe in a revelation that is. So the Christian sermon finds room to bring out true evaluations and place emphasis where it belongs.

We think that the heart of our theme is wrapped around Thomas Gray's "Elegy in a Country Graveyard." While it brings out the idea of undeveloped human power, it also gives implications of democracy. Before Oliver Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" singing the praises of a "bold peasantry, their country's pride," before Robert Burns with his "a man's a man for a' that" Gray gave us the Elegy. As a writer in the New York Times reminds us, "He was the pioneer literary spokesman for the ordinary man." In this great poem we find the words we would like to have inscribed on our own tombstones, as we recall our hopes and dreams, for the most part arrested and stymied:

"Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre."

As with persons so with locale. We hear the words "hick towns." This is a traffic in misnomer. There are no hick towns. Those who dwell in remote places are not provincial or insular. You will find such also in large places and congested centers. Intelligence and understanding can be found on the crossroads as well as in the big cities. Greatness, comprehension, tolerance, Christianity, is not a matter of geography. It is knowing the difference between a multitude and brotherhood, neighborhood. Somebody says "God made the country but man made the town." Perhaps. But it was the man from the country who did it. "Can there be any good thing come from Nazareth?" History and experience invites "Come and see." The ideals emanating from the little town of Bethlehem have swayed the thinking and the action of the centuries. Come see The *Little White Meeting House* and the *Little Red School House*. Come see the folks who live quiet, clean, simple lives, without benefit of juke boxes and traffic jams.

If you are going to preach in the city wear your best clothes. If you are going to preach in the country bring your best sermon. When Ezra Squier Tipple gave us his book "Some Famous Country Parishes," giving description and pictures of outstanding preachers and parishes, in rural England, he gave heart and courage to country pastors the world over.

When we think of greatness we also are led to think of goodness which in itself is a form of greatness. Here, too, we find matters of relationship and perspective. Macaulay in a classic passage on Milton, illustrates. He is blaming the defenders of Charles the First for citing his private virtues to extenuate his private sins. Something with which we are familiar in our own times when we find ourselves in the throes of a national election. Macaulay continues: "We charge him with having broken his coronation oath and we are told he kept his marriage vow. We accuse him of having given his people up to the merciless exactions of the most hot-headed and hard-hearted of prelates and the defence is that he took his little son on his knees and kissed him. For ourselves, we own that we do not understand the common phrase, 'a good man but a bad king.' We can as easily conceive a good man and an unnatural father or a good man or a treacherous friend. We cannot in estimating the character of an individual, leave out of consideration his conduct in the most important of all human relations."

One cannot pray cream and live skim milk.
One cannot entertain God and the devil on the same floor.

GENERAL

Back to School Party	298
Book Reviews	318
Choosing Sermons	298
Church Methods	298
Credit Union	299
Dead Run	297
Devotional Classics	300
Editorial	296
Greatness	293
Illustrations	295
Jesus Standing By	299
Junior Sermons	313
Prayer at Prayer	297
Open Church	299
Pastor's Visit	290
Ready for Worship	293
Sermons	302
Serviceman's S.O.S.	300
Survey On Beliefs	296
World Crucifies Self	296

ARTICLES

Greatness, Braumstein	293
Pastor's Visits	290
Ready for Worship	293
Jenkins	293

EDITORIALS

On Dead Run	297
Survey On Faith	296
World Crucifies Self	296

SERMONS

Mountain Full of Horses	306
Sherman	306
What Wilt Thou	302
Macartney	309
Why? Neeb	309

JUNIOR SERMONS

Keep Trying	314
Not So "Mere"	313

CHURCH METHODS

Back to School Party	298
Choosing Sermons	298
Credit Union	299
Devotional Classics	300
Douglass S. S. Lessons	299
Folding Stage	301
Honor Books	300
Jesus Lights Lamp	299
Lord's Prayer	301
Open Church	299
Pell's Notes, 1953	299
Postcards for Parish Use	300
Serviceman's S.O.S.	300
Writing for Publication	300

ILLUSTRATIONS

Alabaster Boxes	317
Almost-ers	297
Deliverance Through Christ	316
Friends In Deed	317
Godhead, Nature of	316
Light and Salvation	315
Nation At Prayer	297
Sin Conquered	316
Stopped Too Soon	315
Talent In Use	304
Treasure, Where Is?	316

SCRIPTURE TEXTS

I—Illustrations

S—Sermons

Judges 6:11-14 (S)	309
II Kings 6:17 (S)	306
Psa. 27:1 (I)	315
Matt. 6:21 (I)	316
Matt. 15:8 (S)	293
Matt. 20:26-27 (S)	295
Matt. 26:6-13 (I)	317
Acts 9:6 (S)	302
Rom. 6:22 (I)	316
Phil. 3:14 (I)	315
I John 5:7 (I)	316

Here is, we are told, an essay on greatness, written by a little girl.

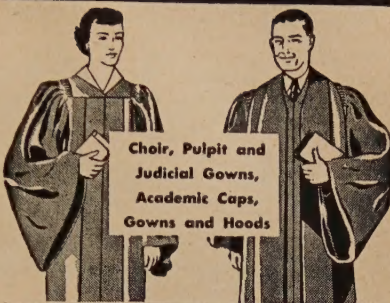
You never get great by trying for it. You get great when you do not try for it. You can be great when you have fine clothes but you can be great when you do not have fine clothes.

Once there was a little bird with a broken leg. One morning it stood on the branch of a tree on its good leg and sang. That was greatness. Once there was a woman who hung out a big washing and the line broke and the clothes all came down. She did the washing over again and spread the clothes in the grass and a dog with muddy feet came along and walked over the nice clean clothes. The woman said, "Ain't it funny that he didn't miss nothing?" That is greatness!

Once there was a woman who lived near an awfully smelly pig pen but she learned to smell the clover blossoms that grew near the pig pen. And that was greatness.

(Matt. 20:26-27. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.")

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Woolverton 321

CANDLES & CANDLE SETS

EMKAY (Muench-Kreuzer)
..... 292

CHAIRS AND TABLES (Folding)

Monroe Co. 323

Redington & Co., J. P. 322

CHURCH BULLETINS and PAPERS

Ecl. Art Press 319

CHURCH FURNITURE

Josephinum Furniture 319

Manitowoc Ch. Furn. 312

Ossit Co. 315

Redington & Co., J. P. 323

COMMUNION SERVICE

Sanitary Com. Service 319

GOWNS, (Pulpit and Choir)

Bentley & Simon 31

Collegiate Gown 31

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Ward Co., C. E. 32

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Ministers Casualty 31

Presby. Min. Fund 31

MEMORIAL TABLETS

Int'l Bronze 32

MISCELLANEOUS

College of Metaphysics 31

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SAUNDERS, W. B. 30

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